

To: Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
Re: SB 367 - Patuxent River Commission
January 27, 2022

I am writing on behalf of **Laurel for the Patuxent Inc**, a nonprofit grassroots organization founded in Laurel in 2019 to protect and preserve the Patuxent River and its environs in and around the City of Laurel.

We wish to add our voices to the support of **SB 367**, the Patuxent River Commission Membership bill.

As full time guardian of the Patuxent River, the Patuxent Riverkeeper should be assured of a seat on the Patuxent River Commission. A Riverkeeper's responsibilities include patrolling local waterways, tracking down sources of pollution, responding to citizen complaints, identifying problems that impact water quality and advocating for environmental laws and regulations to ensure clean water.

With expertise and concern for our beloved river, the Patuxent Riverkeeper spends countless hours performing just these duties with intimate, first hand knowledge from a long partnership with the river and the land. Such a devoted and necessary position should not be excluded from the body that oversees and makes important decisions about our river.

We urge this committee to vote favorably on SB 367. The health of our river and our environment depend upon having informed and wise people in such positions. The Riverkeeper's position should be at the top of the list.

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Secretary, Laurel for the Patuxent